

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333458173>

An Age-friendly Quebec

Article · May 2009

CITATIONS

0

2 authors:



Marie Beaulieu

Université de Sherbrooke

1,064 PUBLICATIONS 538 CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE



Suzanne Garon

Université de Sherbrooke

122 PUBLICATIONS 134 CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE

Some of the authors of this publication are also working on these related projects:



The conceptual clarification between older adult bullying and mistreatment / La clarification conceptuelle entre l'intimidation et la maltraitance envers les personnes âgées [View project](#)



Age friendly Cities and Communities [View project](#)

An Age-friendly Quebec

By Marie Beaulieu, Ph.D. et Suzanne Garon, Ph.D.



Marie Beaulieu is a researcher at the Research Centre on Aging (CDRV) and a full professor at the department of social services of the faculty of letters and humanities of the Université de Sherbrooke.



Suzanne Garon is an associate researcher at the Research Centre on Aging (CDRV) and a full professor at the department of social services of the faculty of letters and humanities of the Université de Sherbrooke.

In the spring of 2008, the Government of Québec announced that it would support the implementation of the Age-friendly Cities program in seven cities across the province with a \$2.8-million budget over a five-year period.

Researchers Marie Beaulieu and Suzanne Garon of the Research Centre on Aging of the CSSS-IUGS have been mandated to supervise the different stages of the Age-friendly Cities Program. They will conduct a series of studies to evaluate the implementation and the concrete effects of the Age-friendly Cities program (Ville-amie des aînés) on senior populations.

This project arose from a single premise: across the globe, the proportion of seniors is increasing more rapidly in urban centres than in rural environments. Researchers from 33 cities and 22 countries responded to the World Health Organization (WHO) initiative to better understand the role of seniors in cities and their particular problems, and to propose solutions.

In Sherbrooke, Ms. Beaulieu and Ms. Garon have led the study for the WHO. Their data have been compared with those of other very diversified cities such as Tokyo, Melbourne, Shanghai, Portland, Geneva, and so on.

The findings? Seniors across the planet share similar preoccupations such as the importance of feeling *at home*, the desire to have inter-generational relationships rather than living in *ghettos* for seniors, transportation, access to community care and medications, and so on. Across the globe, seniors express a strong desire to continue to participate in social and cultural development.

Following this international study, the WHO published *Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide* in October 2007. This guide contains 40 proposals to help cities develop programs to improve conditions for seniors aged 60 and older.

"Making cities age-friendly is one of the most effective policy approaches for responding to demographic ageing," according to the WHO.

In Quebec, the publication of this guide coincided with the public consultation on the living condition of seniors led by Minister Marguerite Blais. The Ministère de la Famille et des Aînés decided to support the implementation of the Age-friendly Cities initiative in seven cities and MRCs until 2013. They are: Drummondville, Quebec City, Rimouski, Rivière-du-loup, MRC de Témiscamingue, Granby and Sherbrooke.



The researchers are mandated to support each of the seven cities and MRCs in assisting their project managers and steering committees appropriate the different stages of the program as a whole. A needs and expectations assessment for seniors will be completed in each city. In addition, an inventory of the specific elements and existing services offered by each city is under way. Action plans will then need to be implemented. They will contain various mechanisms to assess the implementation and measures taken as part of the *Age-friendly Cities* initiative.

From the perspective of the WHO, focused as it is on community development, health is not just an individual concern: it is a global preoccupation. The approach is participatory: local communities become directly involved in the changes implemented to improve the living conditions of their seniors.

The project requires not only the direct involvement of seniors, but also of seniors' groups, social services, municipalities, and so on. Each city will have its own diagnosis and action plan for its own priorities (i.e. increasing public transportation to improve the mobility of seniors, encouraging access to fitness and recreation centres, changing methods to contact cities, and so on).

At the crossroad of research in health and social services, *Age-friendly Cities* will also serve as a vehicle for many studies. At the end of the project, the Ministère de la Famille et des Aînés will have three guides adapted from *Age-friendly Cities* to the different urban, semi-urban and rural realities of Quebec. These guides will be made available to the cities of Quebec that wish to become *age-friendly*.

WERE YOU AWARE THAT... ?
The City of Sherbrooke is the only francophone city in North America to have participated in the WHO study to develop the Age-friendly Cities guide.



Ms. Marguerite Blais, the minister responsible for seniors, and two researchers during the launch of the Age-friendly Cities project in Sherbrooke.